



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## President Shelly praises nomination of Estevan Lopez to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



*Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly praised the nomination of Estevan Lopez to serve as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. President Shelly and Vice President Jim were in Washington, D.C. last week on behalf of the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Jared King)*

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly lauded the nomination of Estevan Lopez to serve as Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The U.S. Department of Interior reported that President Barack Obama nominated Lopez to serve as commissioner. An engineer by profession, Lopez has more than 20 years experience in water resource management.

Michael Connor, the former commissioner, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as Deputy Secretary of the DOI on Feb. 27.

"Mr. Lopez is a welcomed

public servant who will do well in serving as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation," President Shelly said. "His years of service is impressive and shows his support for clean up work and remediation on the Navajo Nation and for tribes.

"Mr. Lopez has our full support," he added.

Stanley Pollack, assistant attorney general for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice Water Rights Unit, said Lopez previously served as executive director of the N.M. Interstate Stream Commission.

"He was very instrumental in getting the approval of the

Interstate Stream Commission for the Navajo Nation water rights settlement. He's a great guy and a friend of the Nation," Pollack said.

The agreement provides the Navajo Nation with 130,000 acre feet of water from the San Juan for farming. This is in addition to the 195,400 acre feet the Navajo Nation currently uses.

The water rights settlement for the Navajo Nation for the San Juan River was approved by the NMISC in 2005 and by Congress in 2009. The Eleventh District Court in San Juan County approved the water rights settlement in

August 2013.

Lopez awaits confirmation by the U.S. Senate before taking the reins for a federal agency with a \$1 billion annual budget serving 17 western states with more than 5,000 employees.

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